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In cooperation with:

Louisiana State Department of
Agriculture & Forestry

Louisiana State University
Agriculture Center

Volume 06 Number 7

LOUISIANA FARM REPORTER

Aril 5, 2006

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Louisiana Prospective Plantings For 2006

Based on our March 1 survey of planting intentions, Louisiana cotton and soybean acres are expected to increase over last year. We expect cotton and soybeans to be up eight percent. Planting intentions for sweet potatoes show an increase from 2005.

The prospective planting intentions reflect the current economic and weather conditions as of March 1. Actual acreage planted may increase or decrease based on what happens during the rest of the planting season. A June 1 survey will be conducted, and planted acreage updates will be released from that survey on June 30, 2006.

Cotton growers intend to plant 660,000 acres, up 50,000 acres, or 8 percent, from a year ago.

Soybean planted acreage is expected to increase 8 percent from last year, to 950,000 acres.

Rice planted acreage is expected to decrease to 440,000 acres, 17 percent below last year. This would be the lowest planted acreage since 1987, when the state planted 425,000 acres.

Corn planted acreage is expected to total 280,000 acres, down 60,000 acres, or 18 percent from a year ago. This would be the lowest planted acreage since 1995, when the state planted 230,000 acres.

Grain sorghum intentions indicate acreage will total 90,000, the same as in 2005.

Sweet potato planted acreage, at 19,000 acres, is expected to be up 6 percent from a year ago.

Winter wheat acreage seeded last fall is estimated at 110,000 acres, the same as a year ago.

An estimated 320,000 acres of hay will be harvested, down 9 percent from last year.

Sugarcane acreage for harvest will be available on June 30, 2006.

United States Prospective Plantings

Upland Cotton area planted for 2006 is expected to total 14.6 million acres, 3 percent more than last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.3 million acres, up 3 percent from last year. Growers intend to increase plantings of American-Pima cotton to record high 334,000 acres, up 24 percent from 2005.

Soybean producers intend to plant 76.9 million acres in 2006, up 7 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the largest planted area on record. Acreage increases are expected in all growing areas, except in the central and southern Atlantic Coast States and the southern Great Plains.

Rice area intended in 2006 is estimated at 2.97 million acres, down 12 percent from 2005 and down 11 percent from 2004. Long grain intended acreage, representing 78 percent of the total, is down 16 percent from last year. Medium grain intended acreage is up 5 percent from 2005 and represents 20 percent of the total. Area intended for short grain varieties increased 2 percent from 2005 and represents 2 percent of the total.

Corn growers intend to plant 78.0 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2006, down 5 percent from 2005 and 4 percent below 2004. If realized will be the lowest corn acreage since 2001 when 75.7 million acres were planted for all purposes.

Sorghum area intended to be planted for all purposes is estimated at 6.48 million acres in 2006, up fractionally from 2005. Sorghum acres are expected to increase from last year in eight states, but decrease in nine states.

Sweet Potatoes growers intend to plant 94,200 acres of sweet potatoes in 2006, up 4 percent from last year but 3 percent below 2004. This intended increase in planted acreage is being influenced by higher prices received for last year's crop by growers in the major sweet potato states.

All wheat planted area is expected to total 57.1 million acres, down slightly from 2005. If realized, this will be the lowest all wheat acreage since 1972.

Hay producers expect to harvest 61.5 million acres of all hay in 2006, down fractionally from 2005. The state with the largest expected increase is Oklahoma, up 180,000 acres from last year. Wildfires and drought conditions during last fall and winter in Oklahoma combined to limit available pasture and increase supplemental feeding.

Prospective Plantings: Louisiana and United States, March 1, 2006, with 2005 Comparisons

Crop	Louisiana			United States		
	2005	2006	% Change	2005	2006	% Change
	----- Thousand Acres -----			----- Thousand Acres -----		
Corn	340	280	-18	81,759	78,019	-5
Upland Cotton	610	660	+8	13,925	14,300	+3
Rice	530	440	-17	3,384	2,972	-12
Sorghum	90	90	---	6,454	6,483	---
Soybeans	880	950	+8	72,142	76,895	+7
Sweet potatoes	18	19	+6	90.4	94.2	+4
All Wheat	110	110	---	57,229	57,128	---
Hay ¹	350	320	-9	61,649	61,478	---

¹Harvesting intentions.

Commercial Livestock Slaughter and Red Meat Production

Item	Louisiana					United States			
	January	February		January – February		February		January – February	
	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
	----- Number, thousand head -----					----- Number, thousand head -----			
Cattle	0.6	1.3	0.7	2.4	1.3	2,342.9	2,345.9	4,871.0	4,987.6
Calves	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.6	61.7	53.0	129.6	108.6
Hogs	1.3	2.0	1.7	3.7	3.0	8,107.8	8,054.7	16,588.1	16,970.3
Sheep & Lambs	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	214.0	202.5	423.6	426.3
	----- Total live weight, thousand pounds -----					----- Total live weight, thousand pounds -----			
Cattle	465	1,107	644	2,055	1,109	2,936,796	3,009,921	6,126,447	6,395,225
Calves	162	153	175	448	337	20,182	19,192	42,524	39,655
Hogs	280	431	349	756	629	2,188,843	2,190,183	4,477,756	4,626,047
Sheep & Lambs	7	36	27	45	34	29,993	29,344	58,753	61,580
	----- Average live weight, pounds -----					----- Average live weight, pounds -----			
Cattle	793	862	869	856	853	1,253	1,283	1,258	1,282
Calves	494	487	506	498	562	327	362	328	365
Hogs	212	211	206	204	210	270	272	270	273
Sheep & Lambs	89	125	122	113	113	140	145	139	144
	----- Million pounds -----					----- Million pounds -----			
Red Meat	0.6	1.1	0.8	2.1	1.4	3,423.8	3,483.8	7,071.8	7,374.2

Louisiana Livestock Slaughter

Commercial red meat production in Louisiana during February totaled 0.8 million pounds, up 33 percent from January but 27 percent below the previous year.

There were 700 head of **cattle** slaughtered during February, up 100 head from January but 600 head below the previous year. Average live weight was 869 pounds, up 76 pounds from the previous month and 7 pounds above February 2005. Total live weight, at 644,000 pounds, was 38 percent above the previous month but 42 percent below the previous year.

Calves slaughtered during February totaled 300 head, unchanged from January and the previous year. Live weight averaged 506 pounds, up 12 pounds from January and 19 pounds above a year ago. Total live weight, at 175,000 pounds, was up 8 percent from January and 14 percent above the previous year.

The number of **hogs** slaughtered during February totaled 1,700 head, up 400 head from the previous month but 300 head below February 2005. Average live weight was 206 pounds, down 6 pounds from January and 5 pounds below the previous year. Total live weight was 349,000 pounds, 25 percent above January but 19 percent below a year ago.

The number of **sheep** slaughtered during February was 200 head, up 100 head from January but down 100 head from the previous year. Live weight averaged 122 pounds, up 33 pounds from the previous month but 3 pounds below the previous year.

United States Livestock Slaughter

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.48 billion pounds in February, up 2 percent from the 3.42 billion pounds produced in February 2005.

February 2006 contained 20 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays. February 2005 contained 20 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays.

Beef production, at 1.82 billion pounds, was 3 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.35 million head, up slightly from February 2005. The average live weight was up 30 pounds from the previous year, at 1,283 pounds.

Veal production totaled 11.7 million pounds, 3 percent below February a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 53,000 head, down 14 percent from February 2005. The average live weight was 35 pounds above last year, at 362 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.63 billion pounds, up slightly from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.05 million head, 1 percent below February 2005. The average live weight was 2 pounds above the previous year, at 272 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 14.7 million pounds, was down 3 percent from February 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 202,500 head, 5 percent below last year. The average live weight was 145 pounds, up 5 pounds from February a year ago.

January to February 2006 commercial red meat production was 7.4 billion pounds, up 4 percent from 2005. Accumulated beef production was up 5 percent from last year; veal was down 5 percent; pork was up 3 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was up 4 percent.

Louisiana Grain Stocks

Corn stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2006, at 23.7 million bushels, were up 45 percent from last year's 16.3 million bushels.

Sorghum stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2006, at 1.74 million bushels, were up 11 percent from last year's 1.57 million bushels.

Soybean stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2006, at 6.45 million bushels, were up 52 percent from last year's 4.23 million bushels.

Louisiana and U.S. Grain Stocks, March 1, 2005-2006

Item	Louisiana ¹		United States	
	March 1		March 1	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
	-----Thousand Bushels-----		-----Thousand Bushels-----	
Corn				
On-Farm			4,137,000	4,055,000
Off-Farm ²	<u>16,336</u>	<u>23,715</u>	<u>2,619,334</u>	<u>2,932,178</u>
Total			6,756,334	6,987,178
Sorghum				
On-Farm			33,400	25,900
Off-Farm ²	<u>1,565</u>	<u>1,740</u>	<u>170,122</u>	<u>166,939</u>
Total			203,522	192,839
Soybeans				
On-Farm			795,000	872,000
Off-Farm ²	<u>4,231</u>	<u>6,446</u>	<u>586,364</u>	<u>796,555</u>
Total			1,381,364	1,668,555
All-Wheat				
On-Farm			304,710	256,000
Off-Farm ²	<u>8,493</u>	<u>6,715</u>	<u>679,681</u>	<u>716,240</u>
Total			984,391	972,240

¹ Louisiana on farm stocks and total stocks not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations

² Includes stocks at mills, elevators, warehouses, terminals, and processors

Louisiana Rice Stocks

All wheat stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2006, at 6.72 million bushels, were down 21 percent from the 8.49 million bushels stored a year ago.

Date	On Farm	Off Farm ¹	Total All Positions
	(Domestic Units – 1,000 Cwt)		
	Rough Rice		
March 1, 2005	2/	2/	10,127
August 1, 2005	2/	2/	2,454
December 1, 2005	9,000	9,890	18,890
March 1, 2006	3,500	6,298	9,798

¹ Includes stocks at mills, elevators, warehouses, ports and in transit.

² Included in unallocated to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Louisiana Rice Stocks

Rough rice stocks reported in all positions on March 1, 2006, totaled 9.80 million cwt, down 3 percent from the 10.1 million cwt stored a year ago.

United States Rice Stocks

Date	On Farm	Off Farm ¹	Total All Positions
	(Domestic Units – 1,000 Cwt)		
	Rough Rice		
March 1, 2005	37,590	81,193	118,783
August 1, 2005	2,815	28,822	31,637
December 1, 2005	58,630	101,518	160,148
March 1, 2006	30,865	80,416	111,281
	Milled Rice		
	March 1, 2005	---	5,419
	August 1, 2005	---	4,300
	December 1, 2005	---	5,940
	March 1, 2006	---	4,572

¹ Includes stocks at mills, elevators, warehouses, ports and in transit.

Average Prices Received by Farmers: Louisiana and United States

Item	Louisiana			United States		
	Entire Month		Preliminary	Entire Month		Preliminary
	March	February	March	March	February	March
	2005	2006	2006 ¹	2005	2006	2006 ¹
	Dollars			Dollars		
Soybeans, per bushel	6.51	5.92	5.70	5.95	5.67	5.55
Rice, per cwt	7.53	8.19	8.03	6.97	7.97	8.05
Upland Cotton, per pound	.432	.479	.480 ²	.403	.490	.496 ²
Hay, all, baled, per ton	n/a	n/a	n/a	92.60	95.00	97.10
Beef Cattle, per cwt ³	68.70	68.00	63.50	91.00	92.40	89.20
Steers & Heifers, per cwt	108.00	111.00	106.00	95.20	97.80	94.10
Cows, per cwt ⁴	53.40	51.30	47.00	55.00	49.70	49.90
Calves, per cwt	128.00	134.00	126.00	136.00	142.00	138.00
Broilers, live, per pound	n/a	n/a	n/a	.440	.380	.370
Eggs, all, per dozen	n/a	n/a	n/a	.526	.495	.664
Milk, all, per cwt ⁵	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.60	13.50	12.80

¹Mid-month.

²Preliminary prices are based on sales during the first half of the month.

³"Cows" and "steers and heifers" combined.

⁴Beef cows and cull dairy cows sold for slaughter.

⁵Before deductions for hauling and government withholdings. Includes bulk tank, quantity and other premiums. Excludes hauling subsidies.

n/a = not available.

Prices Received Index Decreased 1 Point

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in March, at 113, based on 1990-92=100, decreased 1 point from February. The Crop Index is up 3 points but the Livestock Index decreased 3 points. Producers received higher commodity prices for eggs, lettuce, potatoes and cauliflower. Lower prices were received for cattle, milk, tomatoes and strawberries. The overall index is also affected by the seasonal change based on a 3-year average mix of commodities a producer sells. Increased average marketings of asparagus, strawberries, milk and tomatoes offset decreased marketings of cattle, oranges upland cotton and corn.

Preliminary All Farm Products Index is down 6 points from March 2005. The Food Commodities Index, at 116, decreased 1 point from last month and 7 points from March 2005.

Prices Paid Index Down 1 Point

The March Index of Prices Paid for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates is 144 percent of the 1990-92 average. The index is down 1 point from February but 5 points above March 2005. Lower prices in March for feeder cattle, LP gas, nitrogen fertilizers and feed concentrates offset higher prices for diesel fuel, gasoline, herbicides and hay and forages.

The Louisiana Farm Reporter (USPS-0056-7670) is published semi-monthly (Twice a month) by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, USDA-NASS, Louisiana Field Office Service, 5825 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, La 70806. Subscription is free to respondents and cooperators, \$10.00 annually to all others, and is available from the above address. Periodicals Postage is Paid in Baton Rouge, LA and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send changes of address to Louisiana Farm Reporter, P. O. Box 65038, Baton Rouge, LA 70896-5038.

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